

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 20, 2008 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 1, 5, 9, 21, and 22 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Claim 3 was previously cancelled. New claims 27-29 have been added. Support for claims 27-29 may be found in the specification, for example, at paragraph 0023. No new matter has been added. Therefore, claims 1-2 and 4-29 are currently pending in the application and are respectfully submitted for consideration.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action rejected claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, alleging that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “apparatus” in claim 21. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 21 has been amended to replace “the apparatus” with “at least one serving network node,” and that the amendment effectively moots the rejection. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejected claims 1-2 and 4-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Stille et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0128028)

(“Stille”), in view of Anderson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,148,198) (“Anderson”). The Office Action took the position that Stille discloses all the elements of the claims with the exception of “checking on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of a home network; and selecting the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.” The Office Action then cited Anderson as allegedly curing the deficiencies of Stille. (See Office Action at pages 4-5). Applicants respectfully submit that said claims recite allowable subject matter for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1, upon which claims 2, 4, and 23 are dependent, recites a method, which includes maintaining partner information about predefined partner networks, the partner information indicating that network operators share a serving network node, and selecting a gateway network node for a mobile station served by the serving network node on the basis of the partner information. The selecting of the gateway network node for the mobile station on the basis of the partner information includes checking, in a network apparatus, on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of a home network, and selecting, in the network apparatus, the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 5, upon which claims 6-14 and 24 are dependent, recites a system, which includes at least one mobile station, and a subscriber register configured to maintain subscriber information of the mobile station. The system further includes at least two

networks to which the mobile station connects when the mobile station is within the area of the network, one of the networks being a home network of the mobile station. The networks include at least one gateway network node to interact between packet switched mobile networks and external data networks. The system further includes at least one serving network node configured to serve the mobile station while the mobile station is in the area of the serving network node. The system is configured to maintain partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of the home network, the home network sharing at least one serving network node with each of the predefined partner networks. The system is further configured to check, in a network apparatus, on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, and select, in the network apparatus, the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 15, upon which claims 25-26 are dependent, recites an apparatus, which includes a first routine configured to maintain partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing at least one serving network node, where the serving network node is configured to serve a mobile station while the mobile station is in the area of the serving network node. The apparatus further includes a second routine configured to check the partner information of the mobile station. The apparatus further includes a third routine configured to indicate, on the basis of the partner information, the gateway network node, to which the mobile

station is to be connected, to the serving network node serving the mobile station. The apparatus further includes a checking unit configured to check on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network. The apparatus further includes an indicator configured to indicate the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 16, upon which claims 17-18 are dependent, recites an apparatus, which includes a first routine configured to check partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, the partner network and a home network sharing the apparatus. The apparatus further includes a second routine configured to select a gateway network node on the basis of the partner information. The apparatus further includes a checking unit configured to check on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network. The apparatus further includes a selector configured to select the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 19 recites an apparatus, which includes partner information checking means for checking partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing the apparatus. The apparatus further includes selecting means for selecting a gateway network node on the basis of the partner information. The apparatus further includes checking means for checking on the

basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network. The apparatus further includes predefined partner network selecting means for selecting the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 20 recites an apparatus, which includes maintaining means for maintaining partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing at least one serving network node, where the serving network node is configured to serve a mobile station while the mobile station is in the area of the serving network node. The apparatus further includes partner information checking means for checking the partner information of the mobile station, and gateway network node indicating means for indicating, on the basis of the partner information, the gateway network node, to which the mobile station is to be connected, to the serving network node serving the mobile station. The apparatus further includes checking means for checking on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, and predefined partner network indicating means for indicating the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 21 recites a method, which includes checking partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing at least one serving network node, and selecting a gateway network node on the basis of the partner information. The method further includes

checking, in a network apparatus, on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, and selecting, in the network apparatus, the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 22 recites a method, which includes maintaining partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing at least one serving network node, where the serving network node is configured to serve a mobile station while the mobile station is in the area of the serving network node. The method further includes checking the partner information of the mobile station, and indicating, on the basis of the partner information, the gateway network node, to which the mobile station is to be connected, to the serving network node serving the mobile station. The method further includes checking, in a network apparatus, on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, and indicating, in the network apparatus, the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 27 recites a computer program product comprising a computer program embodied on a computer readable medium. The computer program is configured to cause, if the program is executed, an apparatus to perform at least, maintaining partner information about predefined partner networks, the partner information indicating that network operators share a serving network node, and selecting a gateway network node

for a mobile station served by the serving network node on the basis of the partner information. The selecting of the gateway network node for the mobile station on the basis of the partner information includes checking on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of a home network, and selecting the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 28 recites a computer program product comprising a computer program embodied on a computer readable medium. The computer program is configured to cause, if the program is executed, an apparatus to perform at least, checking partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing at least one serving network node, selecting a gateway network node on the basis of the partner information, checking on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, and selecting the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

Claim 29 recites a computer program product comprising a computer program embodied on a computer readable medium. The computer program is configured to cause, if the program is executed, an apparatus to perform at least, maintaining partner information about networks that are predefined partner networks of a network, a partner network and a home network sharing at least one serving network node, where the serving network node is configured to serve a mobile station while the mobile station is

in the area of the serving network node, checking the partner information of the mobile station, indicating, on the basis of the partner information, the gateway network node, to which the mobile station is to be connected, to the serving network node serving the mobile station, checking on the basis of the partner information whether a mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, and indicating the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network.

As will be discussed below, the combination of Stille and Anderson fails to disclose or suggest all of the elements of the claims, and therefore fails to provide the features discussed above.

Stille describes a shared radio network 6. (See Stille at paragraph 0019). A mobile terminal (MT) 2 contacts the shared radio network 6 which is owned by operators of which one operator is the one that the MT 2 is subscribed to. There, one Node-B 1 is contacted, said Node-B 1 is connected to an RNC (Radio Network controller) 7. Stille describes two MT's 4 and 5, which are subscribed to operator X and operator Y, respectively. Operator X has an agreement with operator A, and operator Y has an agreement with operator B. According to Stille, MT 4 establishes a PDP context with the GGSN in the network of operator A, and MT 5 establishes a PDP context with the GGSN in the network of operator B. (See Stille at paragraph 0031).

Anderson discusses a wireless telecommunication system. In the wireless telecommunication system, service providers are classified into five categories including

a home service provider, a partner service provider, a favored service provider, a forbidden service provider, and a neutral service provider. When a mobile station is located on or near an edge of coverage areas of multiple operators, the mobile station selects the best service provider by comparing system identities or system operator codes transmitted by the service providers. (See Anderson at col. 3, lines 39-43, 53-65).

Applicants respectfully submit that Stille and Anderson, whether considered individually or in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest, all of the elements of the present claims. For example, the combination of Stille and Anderson fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, at least, *“selecting, in the network apparatus, the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network,”* as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 5, 16, 19, 21, and 27-28; and *“an indicator configured to indicate the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network,”* as recited in independent claim 15, and similarly recited in independent claims 20, 22, and 29.

The Office Action correctly concludes that Stille fails to disclose, or suggest, the aforementioned limitations of independent claims 1, 5, 15-16, 19-22, and 27-29. (See Office Action at pages 4-5). Furthermore, Anderson does not cure the deficiencies of Stille. As discussed above, Anderson identifies a mobile station 24 which determines a particular classification of service providers 12, 14, and 16, by using System Identities (SIDs) or System Operator Codes (SOCs). After determining the particular classification

of the service providers 12, 14, and 16, the mobile station 24 utilizes an intelligent roaming procedure to select a best service provider based on a hierarchy of the classified service providers. (See Anderson at col. 3, lines 53-65, emphasis added). Thus, the cited portion of Anderson is completely silent as to selecting a gateway network node. Therefore, Anderson fails to disclose, or suggest, the aforementioned limitations of independent claims 1, 5, 15-16, 19-22, and 27-29.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to combine the solutions of Anderson to the solution of Stille, as Anderson teaches away from the claimed invention. Specifically, Anderson relates to selecting the best service provider by the mobile station, whereas certain embodiments of the invention enable selecting, by a network apparatus, the gateway network node of the home network if the mobile station is in a predefined partner network of the home network, as recited in the independent claims.

Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above, the combination of Stille and Anderson fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, all of the elements of independent claims 1, 5, 15-16, 19-22, and 27-29. For the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 4, and 23 depend upon independent claim 1. Claims 6-14 and 24 depend upon independent claim 5. Claims 25-26 depend upon independent claim 15. Claims 17-18 depend upon independent claim 26. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 4, 6-14, 17-18, and 23-26 should be allowed for at least their dependence

upon independent claims 1, 5, 15, and 16, respectively, and for the specific elements recited therein.

For at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art references fail to disclose or suggest all of the elements of the claimed invention. These distinctions are more than sufficient to render the claimed invention unanticipated and unobvious. It is therefore respectfully requested that all of claims 1-2 and 4-29 be allowed, and this application passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosures: Additional Claim Fee Transmittal
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